



Yavapai County Development Services Department

Permitting & Compliance / Planning & Design Review / Flood Control
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November 12, 2002

Chris Horyza, Project Manager
Bureau of Land Management, Phoenix Field Office
21605 North 7th Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85027

RE: Managing Public Lands in the BLM Planning Areas

Dear Mr. Horyza,

I am writing this letter as a follow up to the recent scoping meetings that have been held by the Bureau of Land Management in and around Yavapai County for the purpose of gaining feedback from the public regarding managing resources on public lands.

First, on behalf of the Board of Supervisors I would like to applaud your "outreach" efforts to involve local and other agencies in your environmental review process. We have had several staff members participate in the workshop that was held on October 30, 2002 and I would like to reiterate the County's willingness to be involved as a "cooperating agency" in the BLM land use planning processes. This interaction is consistent with the County's General Plan Open Space Goals which encourages "maintaining, preserving and sound management of undeveloped land with respect for private property rights and public purposes."

Our interest stems from the fact that there are three BLM Planning areas contained in Yavapai County: The Bradshaw Planning Area, the Lake Havasu Field Office Planning Area and the Agua Fria National Monument. In addition to the four questions on the Planning Worksheet for Resource Management Plan for these areas that I have addressed below, there are several general intergovernmental planning issues that I have also commented on.

1. "What do you value about these public lands and why?"

The Yavapai County General Plan that was recently adopted stated as one of its goal to preserve and protect public lands for their value to the community. They hold significant recreational, cultural and natural value. The visioning process highlighted the County's rich natural resources, unrivalled rivers and bio-diversified riparian areas will be preserved through implementation of the Yavapai County General Plan goals.

2. "What activities or uses on these public lands are important to you and why?"

Our General Plan states that all types of activities and uses are important and valuable on these public lands from active recreation to cattle grazing. We are also concerned about the potential for development and impacts to both surface and groundwater.

3. "How would you like to see the scientific, traditional, recreational, cultural and natural resources of this area managed?"

Having public and agency participation early on and often is a good start. Management of the local areas should be based on local input and needs.

4. "Is there anything else you want to tell us?"

The County is interested in several major issues related to the management of lands under the Bureau. First and foremost, is to continue in the process as a cooperating agency and be involved in the planning process as it continues to move forward. In addition, we are continuing to pursue the rezoning of BLM lands in Yavapai County from a two-acre minimum density to a 36-acre minimum density district. This will enable us to be involved in any further development of lands to ensure they are done in a responsible manner consistent with the County's General Plan and other applicable local, state and federal requirements.

As you are aware, Yavapai County and BLM have already successfully partnered in rezoning 17,000 acres of BLM land in Yavapai County from two-acre minimum to a 36-acre minimum zoning district.

Along those same lines, and in response to the concerns expressed by the public, the County is asking that BLM consider taking this same 17,000 acres of BLM land near Dewey/Humboldt, currently being considered for sale, off the disposal list. This property has significant historical, cultural, and natural resources that need to be preserved and we feel the best way to ensure this happens, is to keep the land public. We would encourage you to not only officially withdraw the exchange proposal with the current proponent but also remove these lands from the disposal list of the Phoenix Resource Management Plan. Your September Planning Bulletin which states, "The increased pressure on public lands for purposes resulting from population increases" as the reason for the Resource Management Plan is testimony to support this request.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to comment and we look forward to continued participation and interaction.

Sincerely,
YAVAPAI COUNTY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Kenneth E. Spedding
Development Services Director

c: Board of Supervisors
Dave Hunt, County Attorney